UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 5
EMERGENCY RESPONSE BRANCH
9311 GROH ROAD, ROOM 216
GROSSE ILE, MI 48138-1697

EPA Region 5 Records Ctr.
247622

JUL 18 2000

REPLY TO ATTENTION OF:

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: ENFORCEMENT ACTION MEMORANDUM - Determination of Need to Conduct an Emergency Removal Action at the Letts Drop Forge Site, Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan (#B5N2)

FROM: Kurt Grunert, On-Scene Coordinator
Emergency Response Branch - Section 1 for KG

TO: William E. Muno, Director
Superfund Division

THRU: Richard C. Karl, Chief
Emergency Response Branch

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this memorandum is to document the determination of the need to conduct an emergency removal action to abate an imminent and substantial threat to public health and the environment posed by the presence of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and uncontrolled hazardous substances at the Letts Drop Forge (LDF) Site located at 2714 West Jefferson Avenue, Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan 48216.

The proposed response action will mitigate threats to public health, welfare, and the environment posed by the presence of uncontrolled hazardous substances located at the Site. Proposed removal actions include continued assessment of chemical hazards on the Site, stabilizing the hazardous substances, securing the Site to prevent public access to hazardous substances, and removing and disposing of the PCBs and other hazardous substances from the Site. The Site's proximity to other businesses, the potential for further migration of hazardous substances, and wastes from spilled transformers, leaking drums, tanks, and containers into off-site, residential streets, and storm water catch basins, and the potential for unrestricted access to the property, require that this removal be classified as an emergency response. The project will require an estimated 75 on-site working days to complete. It is currently anticipated that this removal will be completed by a responsible party pursuant to an administrative order by consent (AOC).

Printed on Recycled Paper

This Site is not on the National Priorities List, has not been ranked, does not set any precedents, and is not nationally significant.

II. SITE CONDITIONS AND BACKGROUND

CERCLIS ID # MIN 000 508 055

The LDF Site is located at 2714 West Jefferson Avenue, Detroit, Michigan. LDF is an abandoned steel forging manufacturing facility, currently owned by Letts Industries, Inc. LDF operated from 1909 to 1996 on the 1.5 acre property. The property consists of two brick buildings and an inner courtyard with a truck loading area and gated entry facing south to West Jefferson Avenue. A small electrical building is also located in the north central portion of the Site, and a concrete electrical transformer pad is located directly south of the electrical building.

The Site is bordered on the north by an alley. A vacant parking area borders the property to the west. Other industrial facilities border the Site on its east and south sides. The Detroit River is located approximately one-quarter mile to the south of the Site. The Site is located at 42° 19' 03.4" north latitude, 83° 04' 31.1" west longitude.

In Michigan, the low-income percentage is 29 and the minority percentage is 18. To meet the Environmental Justice concern criteria, the area within 1 mile of the Site must have a population that's twice the state low income percentage and/or twice the state minority percentage. That is, the area must be at least 58% low income and/or 36% minority. At this Site, the low income percentage is 58 and the minority percentage is 36 as determined by Arcview or Landview III EJ analysis. Therefore, this Site does meet the region's EJ criteria based on demographics as identified in "Region 5 Interim Guidelines for Identifying and Addressing a Potential Environmental Justice Case, June 1998".

On March 30, 2000, the U.S. EPA and the City of Detroit Department of Environmental Affairs observed that the abandoned facility had been vandalized. The vandals had tipped over four of the six transformers to strip their metal. Transformer oil was observed spilled throughout the courtyard of the Site, onto sidewalks, and into a storm water sewer catch basin.

U.S. EPA and its Superfund Technical Assessment and Response Team (START) along with the City of Detroit Department of Environmental Affairs conducted emergency response activities at the Site on March 31, 2000. They contacted Letts Industries, Inc., the owner of the Site, who arrived shortly after to begin containment of spilled materials from the transformers. START photographed the Site and documented areas containing uncontrolled hazardous substances.

A total of six electrical transformers were observed within the inner courtyard of the facility. Two of the transformers remained upright and were not secured. The remaining four transformers had been tipped over, with oil leaking toward the northern and southern boundaries of the property. Oil was observed off-site and spilled onto sidewalks and streets and into a storm water sewer catch basin. Laboratory analytical results from samples collected from one of the transformers indicated Aroclor 1254 and Aroclor 1260 at concentrations of 750 parts per million (ppm) and 550 ppm, respectively. In addition, a sample collected from the truck loading dock area resulted in Aroclor 1254 and Aroclor 1260 at concentrations of 65 ppm and 50 ppm.

Inspection of the two buildings revealed the presence of approximately thirty-three 55-gallon drums and two aboveground storage tanks (ASTs). Many of the drums found inside the two buildings are in very poor condition and are leaking onto the ground/floors of the facility. The majority of drums are labeled in at least some fashion regarding their contents. These labels indicate the presence of flammables, solvents, and oils. A number of the drums have been tipped over and their contents spilled across the ground/floor. Two ASTs were observed outside next to the westernmost building on the Site. No containment areas surround the ASTs, and 1 to 2 inches of black oily liquid was documented on the ground next to both ASTs. Conditions of both ASTs are deteriorating due to exposure to atomospheric conditions, and pose an imminent threat of release. The exact volumes of both ASTs have yet to be determined.

Inside one of the buildings containing three electrical capacitors and an electrical switching gear, all potentially containing PCB oil, several pits were observed which contained uncontrolled black oily liquids. Several of the pits were observed directly next to tipped-over 55-gallon drums, which indicates vandals or unauthorized personnel are entering the facility. Several hypodermic needles were also discovered in one area of the building. A number of small containers were observed in one area of the office building. These contained various chemical liquids and solids. Many of the small containers were found broken and were labeled "Hammer #4, Hammer #5, etc."

On April 13, 2000, U.S. EPA issued a verbal notice of potential liability to LDF, requiring LDF to address the release or threat of release of hazardous substances, pollutants and contaminants at the Site.

Since that time, LDF has retained contractors and consultants who have initiated dialogue with the U.S. EPA On-Scene Coordinator (OSC) regarding the best way to stabilize and clean up the facility. LDF has also retained security contractors to board up the Site and to provide 24-hour, continuous security patrol of LDF buildings.

III. THREATS TO PUBLIC HEALTH, WELFARE, OR THE ENVIRONMENT, AND STATUTORY AND REGULATORY AUTHORITIES

The conditions present at the LDF Site constitute a threat to public health, welfare, or the environment based upon the factors set forth in Section 300.415(b)(2) of the National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan (NCP), as amended, 40 CFR Part 300. These factors include, but are not limited to, the following:

i) Actual or potential exposure to nearby human populations, animals, or the food chain from hazardous substances or pollutants or contaminants;

The LDF facility has the potential for trespassing to occur. Although Letts Industries, Inc., secured the Site during the emergency response, vandals intent on accessing the facility could potentially do so. U.S. EPA discovered six large transformers within the courtyard of the facility. Four of the six transformers were found vandalized with oily contents spilled throughout the courtyard and off-site onto Jefferson Avenue and into a city storm water sewer catch basin. Laboratory analytical results of dielectric liquid samples collected from two transformers exhibited Aroclor 1254 at concentrations of 750 ppm and 450 ppm, respectively. In addition, laboratory analytical results also exhibited Aroclor 1260 at concentrations of 550 ppm and 350 ppm, respectively. Due to the potential accessibility of this area, any animal or human entering this area would have a significant chance of ingestion or contact hazard associated with the high concentration of PCB material. U.S. EPA also observed several large pits containing oily liquids and several leaking drums and small containers throughout the facility, all of which are easily accessible to unauthorized personnel and the public.

ii) Hazardous substances or pollutants or contaminants in drums, barrels, tanks, or other bulk storage containers, that may pose a threat of release;

U.S. EPA documented approximately thirty-three 55-gallon drums and two ASTs at the facility; many have deteriorated and are currently leaking. The contents of the two ASTs are unknown and are currently leaking onto the Site. U.S. EPA will collect and analyze samples from the drums and other containers on the Site during continuation of Site assessment activities and progression of removal activities. Three capacitors and an electrical switching gear were also observed at the Site. The potential for additional spilling of PCB material at the Site exists. Deteriorated building conditions result in increased potential for structural failures, such as roof collapse, which could, in turn, lead to container failure and hazardous substance release. The release of drum contents to floor drains and sewers is highly likely, given the conditions of on-site buildings.

iii) High levels of hazardous substances or pollutants or contaminants in soils largely at or near the surface, that may migrate;

Visibly stained soil is present throughout the spill area associated with PCB transformers. U.S. EPA also observed contaminated soil surrounding a city storm sewer catch basin located on Jefferson Avenue. Laboratory analytical results of surficial soil samples collected within the spill area of dielectric liquids associated with PCB transformers exhibited Aroclor 1254 at concentrations ranging from 3.3 ppm to 23 ppm. Aroclor 1260 was also detected in surficial soil samples at concentrations of 2.9 ppm to 17 ppm. U.S. EPA also collected a liquid sample from a visibly contaminated truck loading dock that contained approximately 4,000 gallons of water and floating oil, which was also in the path of spilled material. Laboratory analytical results showed concentrations of Aroclor 1254 and Aroclor 1260 at 65 ppm and 50 ppm, respectively. Around the base of both ASTs, the Agency observed visibly stained soil, which appeared to be contaminated. Due to the amount of spilled material observed outside of Site buildings, the potential for groundwater contamination and further migration of contaminants off Site exist.

iv) Weather conditions that may cause hazardous substances or pollutants or contaminants to migrate or be released;

Southeast Michigan typically has winter temperatures that are below freezing. Southeast Michigan is also affected by several freeze-thaw cycles during fall, winter, and spring. These factors can be expected to contribute to the further deterioration of the tanks, drums, and other containers, substantially increasing the likelihood of a release. Rainwater continues to fill the truck loading area, and Site run-off continues to flow through the PCB spill area, further contaminating Site property and off-site city storm sewer catch basins.

v) Threat of fire or explosion;

There is a high potential for continued trespassing and vandalism at the Site which could result in fires. In the event of an on-site fire, the nearby populations would face inhalation, ingestion, and direct contact threats from hazardous materials found throughout the Site.

vi) The availability of other appropriate Federal or state response mechanisms to respond to the release;

This factor supports the actions required by U.S. EPA at the Site because the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality and the City of Detroit's Department of Environmental Affairs do not have the resources to respond to the emergency situation.

IV. ENDANGERMENT DETERMINATION

Current Site conditions, including the nature of the hazardous substances on Site, the potential exposure pathways to nearby populations, and the actual or threatened release of hazardous substances from this Site, may present an immediate and substantial endangerment to public health, or welfare, or the environment, if the response action selected in this action memorandum is not implemented.

V. PROPOSED ACTIONS

The following actions are necessary to mitigate threats posed by the presence of hazardous substances or pollutants or contaminants at the LDF Site :

1) Develop and implement a Site-specific Health and Safety Plan;

2) Establish and maintain Site security;

3) Contain all hazardous substances on Site;

4) Conduct sampling to identify, inventory, and characterize hazardous substances or pollutants or contaminants on Site;

5) Stabilize and dispose of off Site all hazardous substances or pollutants or contaminants from drums, tanks, and containers at approved disposal facilities in accordance with the U.S. EPA Off-Site Rule (40 CFR § 300.440);

6) Characterize and excavate highly-contaminated soil and transport off Site to an U.S. EPA-approved disposal facility; and

7) Take any response action to address any release or threatened release of a hazardous substance, pollutant or contaminant that the U.S. EPA determines may pose an imminent and substantial endangerment to the public health or the environment.

The removal action will be conducted in a manner not inconsistent with the NCP. The OSC has initiated planning for provision of post-removal Site control consistent with the provisions of Section 300.415(l) of the NCP. Elimination of all surface threats is, however, expected to minimize the need for post-removal Site control.

The response actions described in this memorandum directly address actual or threatened releases of hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants at the Site which may pose an imminent and substantial endangerment to public health and safety and the environment. These response actions do not impose a burden on the affected

property disproportionate to the extent to which that property contributes to the conditions being addressed.

These activities will require an estimated 75 on-site working days to complete.

Applicable or Relevant and Appropriate Requirements

All applicable, relevant, and appropriate requirements (ARARs) of Federal and State law will be complied with to the extent practicable. A letter was sent to Michael K. Busse of the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality requesting that he identify State ARARs. Any State ARARs identified in a timely manner for this removal action will be complied with to the extent practicable.

All hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants removed off Site pursuant to this removal action, will be treated, stored, or disposed of at a facility in compliance, as determined by U.S. EPA, with the U.S. EPA Off-Site Rule, 40 CFR § 300.440.

VI. EXPECTED CHANGE IN THE SITUATION SHOULD ACTION BE DELAYED OR NOT TAKEN

Delayed or no action will increase the potential of the spilled PCB materials from further threatening adjacent populations and the environment.

VII. OUTSTANDING POLICY ISSUES

None.

VIII. ENFORCEMENT

For administrative purposes, information concerning the enforcement strategy for this Site is contained in the Enforcement Confidential Addendum.

IX. RECOMMENDATION

This decision document represents the selected removal action for the LDF Site located at 2714 West Jefferson Avenue in Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan. It was developed in accordance with CERCLA as amended, and is not inconsistent with the NCP. This decision is based upon the Administrative Record for the Site. Conditions at the Site meet the NCP Section 300.415 (b) (2) criteria for a removal and I recommend your approval of the proposed removal action. It is expected that a

potentially responsible party will perform all removal actions under the oversight of the OSC.

APPROVE: _____ DATE: 7/18/00
Director, Superfund Division

DISAPPROVE: _____ DATE: _____
Director, Superfund Division

Enforcement Addendum
Attachments

1. Administrative Record Index
2. Environmental Justice Analysis

cc: C. Beasley, 5202-G
M.Chezik , Dept. Of Interior
A. Howard, Michigan DEQ

LETTS DROP FORGE SITE
DETROIT, WAYNE COUNTY, MICHIGAN
ORIGINAL AR

DOCUMENT #7

"Action Memorandum: Determination of Need to Conduct an Emergency Removal Action at the Letts Drop Forge Site".

BCC PAGE

REDACTED

NOT RELEVANT TO THE SELECTION OF THE REMOVAL ACTION

LETTS DROP FORGE SITE
DETROIT, WAYNE COUNTY, MICHIGAN
ORIGINAL AR

DOCUMENT #7

"Action Memorandum: Determination of Need to Conduct an Emergency Removal Action at the Letts Drop Forge Site".

ENFORCEMENT ADDENDUM
(1 PAGE)

REDACTED

NOT RELEVANT TO THE SELECTION OF THE REMOVAL ACTION

AR

ATTACHMENT 1

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REMOVAL ACTION

ADMINISTRATIVE RECORD
FOR
LETTS DROP FORGE SITE
DETROIT, WAYNE COUNTY, MICHIGAN

ORIGINAL
JULY 7, 2000

NO.	DATE	AUTHOR	RECIPIENT	TITLE/DESCRIPTION	PAGES
1	03/29/00	Powers, R., U.S. EPA	File	ERNS Incident Notification Report re: the Letts Drop Forge Site	1
2	03/29/00	Powers, R., U.S. EPA	File	Photographs re: the Letts Drop Forge Site	4
3	04/19/00	Grunert, K., U.S. EPA	Distribution List	POLREP #1 (Initial) for the Letts Drop Forge Site	4
4	04/07/00	Kuplicki, S., City of Detroit/ Water and Sewerage Department	Grunert, K., U.S. EPA	Letter re: Items to be Considered in Finalizing the Work Plan for the Letts Drop Forge Site	3
5	04/13/00	Karl, R., U.S. EPA	Letts, C., Letts Industries, Inc.	Letter re: General Notice of Potential Liability for the Letts Drop Forge Site	6
6	00/00/00	Ecology and Environment, Inc.	U.S. EPA	Site Assessment Report for the Letts Drop Forge Site **(PENDING)**	
7	00/00/00	Grunert, K., U.S. EPA	Muno, W., U.S. EPA	Action Memorandum: Determination of Need to Conduct an Emergency Removal Action at the Letts Drop Forge Site **(PENDING)**	

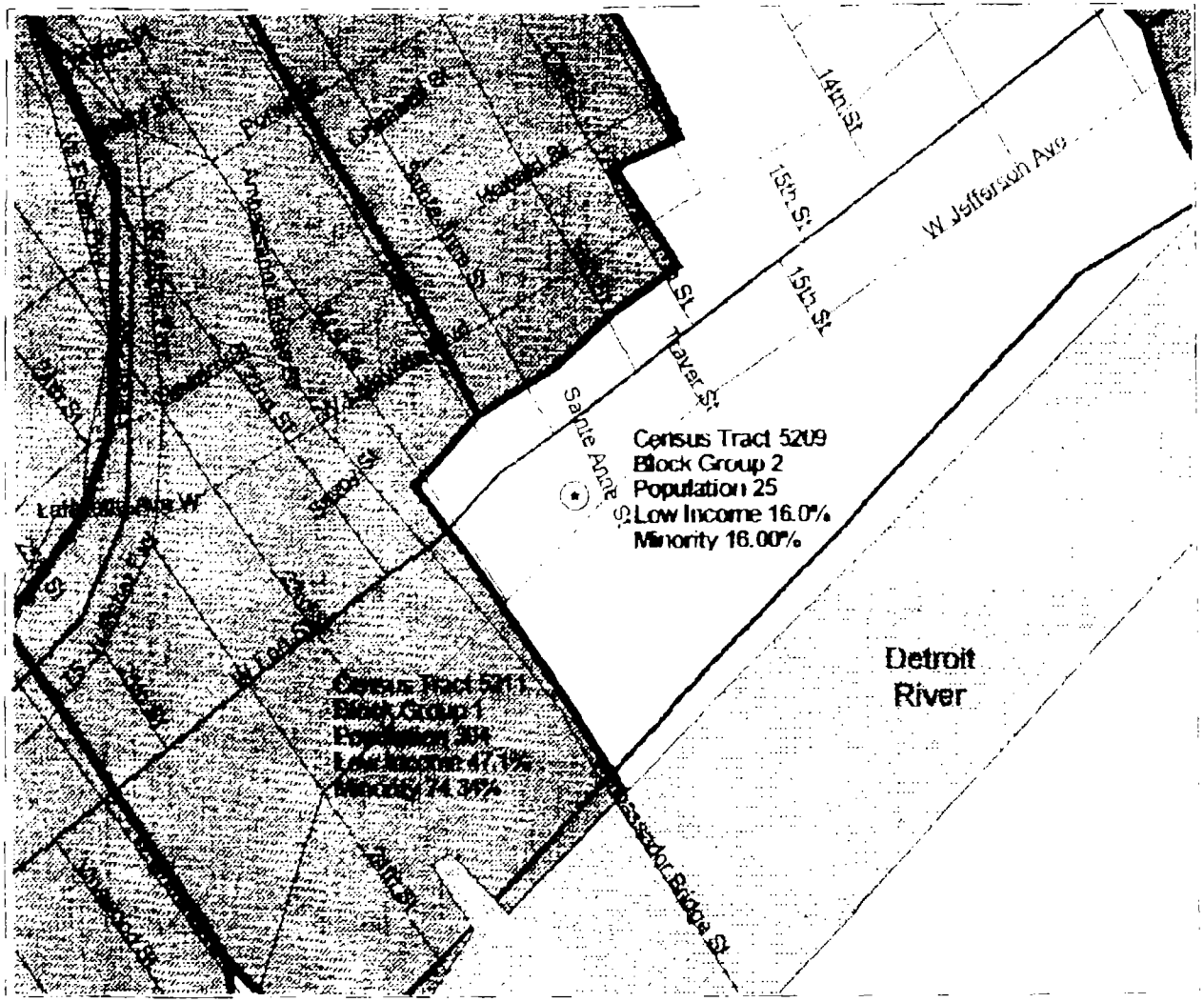
ATTACHMENT 2

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ANALYSIS
LETTS DROP FORGE SITE
DETROIT, WAYNE COUNTY, MICHIGAN

JULY 2000

Region 5 Superfund EJ Analysis

Letts Drop Forge Site Detroit, Michigan



EJ Identification

Low Income and Minority Less than State Average

Low Income or Minority at or Greater than State Average

Low Income or Minority 2 Times or Greater than State Average
(Private Region 5 EJ case criteria)

Site Location

Block Group Boundary

Region 5 EJ Case Criteria for Michigan
Minority 36% or greater
Low Income: 58% or greater

Date of Map: 3/22/2000

Source of Map: 1990 Census Database